

C A S E

T H E

O F T H E

Bookfellers and Printers,

Relating to the **P A T E N T E E S** for the sole Printing all
Books of the Common-Law.

TH A T for some Years last past, several private Persons, for their own particular Gain, have procured **Patents** for the sole printing all Books whatsoever, relating to the common **Law** of this Land. And as such Patentees are not **Printers** by Trade, but Gentlemen, they Farm out the same to others, which Practices are attended with very great Inconveniencies, and are the Occasion of great **Oppressions** upon the Printers and Bookfellers, as well as the rest of Her Majesties **Subjects**.
For,

I. Such Patents are conceived to be a **Monopoly**, a thing very odious in the Eye of the **Law**, and have been once adjudged to be so by all the **Judges**. For as it would be a Monopoly, should the **Crown** grant to any one Person, or Body of Men, the sole Priviledge of making of **Cards**, which is a kind of printing: Why should a **Printer** be under any restraint from exercising so considerable a Branch of his Trade, as that of printing **Law-Books** is? Or why should any Man who hath a mind to publish a Treatise of **Law**, be forced to have it printed at the **Patentees-press**, and not be at his **liberty** to have it done where he can have it done best and cheapest?

II. This is the Occasion of the common Complaint of the excessive Price of all Books relating to the **Law**. For the **Bookfellers** being forced to print all such Books at the Press of the **Patentees**, they compel them to pay five or six Shillings *per Pound* more than the common Price of printing any where else. Besides, they are as long again in the printing of the **Law-Books**, as any other Printers are in doing of the same Work.

III. That the first Pretensions of granting such Patents now ceases. For when Reporters of the **Law** were appointed and paid by the **Crown**, the **Crown** had an Interest in their **Works**, and it was very reasonable it should appoint who should be the **Printers** and Publishers of 'em. But since that Usage is no longer practised, but every Man is at **liberty** to write what Treatises of **Law** he pleases. 'Tis unreasonable, that when a **Bookseller** hath given an Author 2 or 300 *l.* for a **Copy**, he should be forced to pay near half as much more to the Patentees, for **Liberty** to publish it to the World.

IV. That when such Patents were first granted, the Books of the **Law** were very few, and the **Books** in which the **Crown** might be conceived to have any Interest, were mentioned therein, and the **Patent** was granted for such **Books**. Besides, the Number of **Presses** were then very small; but since Printing-Houses are increased, there being about 70 now in **London**, and the Books of the **Law**, as well as Printers, are grown very numerous; It can't be thought hard to say, that such Patents are, at least, a great **Prejudice** to the Improvement of Knowledge, the useful Art of **PRINTING**, and the Trade of those who have no other Method to get a Living.

V. That the **Crown** hath no manner of **Advantage** by such Patents, but the Usage of them may be very **dangerous**, for if such Patents should be allowed, it may seem as reasonable to grant a Patent to a Man, for the sole **Binding** of all **Law-Books**. For Printing is as much a Trade as Book-binding.

Wherefore it is humbly hoped, That this Honourable House will be pleased to take their C A S E into Consideration, and to give them such Relief herein, as to your great Wisdom shall think most just and reasonable.